



For Immediate Release
 September 4, 2007
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Gulf Region South Volunteer Completes Tour

By John Connor
 Gulf Region South

TALLIL, Iraq — Edmay Mayers, a program analyst with the Gulf Region South district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is heading home after nearly 21 months in Iraq during which she opened her heart to the children of the country.

One of the longest serving people at LSA Adder, Edmay says she would have gone home long ago were it not for the children. "It's always been about the kids," she says. "The kids are what kept me here."

Edmay, a native of New Orleans who now resides in Kenner, La., right outside the city, was referring to Iraqi children in three orphanages in Nasiriyah. These children collectively have received more than 1,000 boxes of toys, clothes, shoes, school supplies, and, of course, candy due in large part to her initiative and organizational skills. Also receiving toys and other gifts courtesy of Edmay's efforts are children in Basrah, Kalsu, Diwaniyah, as well as little ones encountered by Americans along the roads of Iraq.

Edmay says she began collecting and distributing toys much earlier in her tour when she was at a different base and began to visit and work with schools. "That got me started on toys," adds Edmay, a grandmother who will turn 60 in December.

Edmay was instrumental in obtaining help from the Aegis Foundation, which was created by one of the firms that does security work for the Corps of Engineers in Iraq, to fix a septic tank and gen-



Edmay Mayers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employee who aided Iraqi children, heads home. [USACE photo].

erator for an infant orphanage in Nasiriyah. She also worked with others in obtaining such needed items as a refrigerator, microwave, a chopper/blender for baby foods for the baby orphanage, and games for the older children.

All these items were paid for by GRS headquarters personnel, who also have collected more than \$500 in "Pogs," paper discs used as a replacement for change in military Exchanges, for the Nasiriyah orphanages. This money will be turned over to the Aegis Foundation for exclusive use for the orphanages in Nasiriyah.

"We did a lot for the kids," Edmay says proudly. And she's not going to stop upon redeployment. Once home, she plans to send more boxes of needed items for the children of Iraq.

As for the ongoing reconstruction efforts of the GRS team, she says, "We do

good work." Col. Steve Hill, the commander of GRS, voiced pride in the entire team and in Edmay's leadership with her job and the extra effort for the children. "Edmay helps remind us all why we are here—for the people of Iraq," he said during a farewell ceremony for Edmay.

Edmay said her return home will allow her 83 year old mother to stop worrying about her. She has been sharing an office at GRS headquarters, interestingly enough, with two other New Orleans-area folks—Frank DeBoer and Emily Mullet.

"I feel like I'm working at the New Orleans office," said Emily, a budget assistant. "They keep me from getting homesick."

"Bon ton roule," or let the good times roll, said Frank, a systems analyst.



New Orleans threesome share U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region South district office. From left, Emily Mullet, Frank DeBoer, Edmay Mayers. [USACE photo].

Editor's Note: John Connor is the public affairs officer of the Gulf Region South district, Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information contact the public affairs office at 540-665-1233, by email at CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil or visit www.grd.usace.army.mil